

10-25-21

Dear Commissioners:

I want to strongly oppose moving the unincorporated community of Altadena into a San Fernando Valley (SFV) district and out of a San Gabriel Valley (SGV) district. Altadena belongs in whatever district contains the City of Pasadena.

Altadena is separated from the SFV by the Arroyo Seco and the 210 freeway. These prominent physical barriers divide any community of interest argument that would tie Altadena to any jurisdiction in the SFV and across the chasms created by the Arroyo and 210 freeway. Those chasms operate as a barrier to information about what is going on in the SFV, as well as serve to limit the interaction of Altadenans on a day-to-day basis with SFV cities. In stark contrast, Altadena's longest border is directly shared by Pasadena without any physical identifying barrier. Altadenans stroll across the border as if it didn't exist. Altadenans also shop in local neighborhoods that are on or straddle this border, without thinking about the border at all. As one example, my family drives from our home in Altadena just a mile to go to a grocery store in Pasadena, we attend a church that is one block outside of Altadena and in Pasadena, and we go to restaurants in Pasadena almost weekly. We consider a foray into the SFV to be a commitment to travel out of our neighborhood and to take the time and battle the traffic to do so – we generally don't go in to the SFV but a handful of times a year.

The City of Pasadena's City Council districts 1, 3, and 5 were formed in 1992 in order to create districts where members of underrepresented racial minority groups could elect their representatives of choice – and since then have consistently elected black and Hispanic representatives. Pasadena district 1 directly abuts Altadena for quite a distance on its south border. The communities of color in Pasadena district 1, and even in districts 3 and 5 on Pasadena's north end don't end at the Pasadena border, but extend into Altadena, creating a community of interest that must be kept together. Similarly, Pasadena's district 2 is heavily Armenian, and that community also does not end at the Pasadena border but also bleeds up in to Altadena as a community of interest. These neighborhood realities connect Altadena to Pasadena in ways that would be torn apart if these communities of interest overlapping Pasadena districts 1, 2, 3, and 5 and Altadena could not act in concert and with the same elected official.

In sum, Altadenans identify with, drive through, share racial identities with and are affected by what happens in Pasadena much more than La Canada, Glendale, or any SFV city. Please keep Altadena in the same district as Pasadena and the SGV.

Thank you,
Theresa Fuentes